



**Taylor & Francis**  
Taylor & Francis Group

---

Knowledge Ethics and the New Academic Culture

Author(s): Clark Kerr

Source: *Change*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan. - Feb., 1994), pp. 8-15

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40165103>

Accessed: 25-08-2014 22:30 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Taylor & Francis, Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Change*.

<http://www.jstor.org>



ILLUSTRATION BY MARK BRAUGHT

# KNOWLEDGE ETHICS AND THE NEW ACADEMIC CULTURE

BY CLARK KERR

**A**ttacks on professors for their unethical behavior are nothing new. Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) wrote of how professors at Oxford, under the dispensation of their academic guilds, "make a common cause to be all very indulgent to one another, and every man to consent that his neighbor may neglect his duty provided he himself is allowed to neglect his own"; one result being that "the greater part of the public professors have, for these many years, given up altogether even the pretense of teaching." As a general rule, "the discipline of colleges and universities is one for the ease of the masters." And the professor in the French universities, under bureaucratic state control and "degraded by it," is "one of the meanest and most contemptible persons in the society" (Book 5, Part 3, Art. 2). Smith favored placing professors instead under competitive market discipline, as private tutors or as instructors in for-profit schools.

Walter Rüegg (1986), a former rector of the University of Frankfurt, has written that professors "enjoy the freedom of a leisured class"; that they "are practically unique in the amount of time at their disposal, free from specific prescriptions as to how they should use it." Under such circumstances, an "inner ethic" is especially important to responsible performance, and, Rüegg adds, so also is appropriate competitive pressure.

Has this inner ethic eroded? If so, is the answer more competitive pressure, à la Adam Smith, or more external bureaucratic controls, such as Smith thought he saw in the French universities, or a renewal of the academic ethic? Or what?

---

CLARK KERR is president emeritus of the University of California. This article was excerpted from *Higher Education Cannot Escape History: Issues for the Twenty-first Century*, by Clark Kerr. By permission of the State University of New York Press. © 1994.

The professoriate is not the only profession under current as well as historic criticism. Daniel Bell has written of the general collapse of "public virtue" under attack from "private vices" and under the impact particularly of "pop hedonism" (1976).

Members of the "me generation" who sometimes neglect "overhead" responsibilities in favor of "my work" have entered the professoriate, but that does not necessarily mean that self-interest and ethical conduct are always in conflict. Particularly where relations are repetitive and occur over an extended period of time, as is usually the situation in academic life, it often does "pay" to act in an ethical way. But this inducement may not always be enough. Some elements of the academic profession in the United States do seem to be tempted to lose some of the profession's hard-won reputation for devotion to duty and for integrity of conduct; but it is premature to conclude that the profession is irrevocably on the road to self-destruction. Self-interest has not overwhelmed knowledge ethics. But the enticements are great. Knowledge is not only power, it is also money—and it is both power and money as never before; and the professoriate above all other groups has knowledge.

**W**hat seems to be happening is that we are moving, at least partially, from a traditional to a post-modern paradigm in academic life. In the traditional paradigm most faculty members were part of a particular academic community as the center of their lives, and they took their on-campus citizenship responsibilities very seriously. There was a generally understood academic ethic that was part of the orientation of the "inner-directed" (as defined by David Riesman) professoriate, and this ethic was reinforced by advice and personal pressure when it was not voluntarily followed.

The "new academic culture" paradigm as now develop-

**T**oday's faculty members have more  
outside allegiances to agencies that fund research, to outside employers . . .  
to friends around the nation in direct contact via the computer and fax machine.  
Alma Mater is, for some faculty members, a plural personality.

ing is different. It involves less commitment to the local academic community and to citizenship obligations within it. Faculty members have more attachments to economic opportunities off campus or to off-campus political concerns on campus. The campus is more of a means to non-academic ends. In this new situation, implicit contracts governing behavior and informal means of enforcement are less effective. They may need, increasingly, to be reinforced by more formal codes of behavior and, particularly, by independent judicial tribunals—as has already happened in many other segments of society, with the result of less reliance on norms and more on laws and courts.

This is to me a sad development, and I see less and less possibility of a cure in substantial voluntary reversal. I have come to believe that, if and to the extent the academic community will not discipline itself, other agencies of society will increasingly participate in what was once the inner life of the academy; and this is already happening to an increasing degree.

Certain it is, at least, that a new paradigm of behavior is competing with the more traditional paradigm for faculty allegiance. This new academic culture places more emphasis on individual and group advantages and concerns, and less on the overall welfare of the college and university as a self-governing community concentrated on advancing knowledge. There are more nomads exploiting the academic environment, and the academic community is more fractionated into contending enclaves than has been customary in the past, and there are fewer "home guard" faculty members. I realize that it is too easy to be nostalgic about a more perfect past; that the past also had its imperfections; that faculty members then often had their own personal "bottom lines"; and that those bottom lines often included to be left alone to do as they pleased, and, at the same time, to be fully recognized in promotions, salary increases, facilities available, and, preferably, in the type of institution to which they aspired.

It is clear, however, that the new academic culture is less concentrated on the particular campus even after tenure is bestowed on faculty members. There are more outside allegiances to agencies that fund research, to outside employers who provide opportunities to consult, to friends around the nation in direct contact via the computer and the fax machine. Alma Mater is, for some faculty members, a plural personality. Locally, the spouse has his or

her own employment, set of interests, and circle of friends. There are more tribes on campus defined by race, ethnic status, and gender. Some fields, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, are more split by ideologies and by preferred methodologies—less, to my way of thinking, united by a common desire to understand complex and changing reality.

Some faculty members, in campuses across the nation, are less willing to serve on committees or accept other overhead responsibilities because they take time, are outside their orbits of interest, and/or involve unpleasant "hassles." Shared governance suffers. Some faculty members—in my experience only a few but growing in number—conceive of proper conduct in terms only of their immediate self-interest or service to their political commitments. Rüegg, later after Frankfurt the rector at Berne, writes of "colleagues" who believe "that in university matters there [is] no such thing as an ethic; everything [is] only a matter of particular group interests."

Academic institutions have themselves added to these directions of movement in at least two ways. Their reward structures give more credit for published research and external recognition than to teaching and contributions to internal governance. Also, more and more of internal governance is being taken over by larger and larger administrative staffs, thus reducing the sense of the academy's being a self-governing community.

**T**he academic community is perhaps the most tolerant and "open" of all professional communities. It is, thus, potentially most subject to what Leszek Kolakowski (1990) has called "the self-poisoning of the open society" unwilling to "defend itself effectively against internal enemies" and susceptible to disintegration in the name of "complete liberation." The open society faces the dilemma of how to protect itself "without using means that contradict its own essence." The result of this indecisiveness can be "moral nihilism." He advises that the open society must be able to "defend itself." Otherwise openness can become only "sickness and weakness."

I do not think that in American higher education we have evolved this far, but there are at least important signs that we may be moving in this direction and that we should beware.

Alexander Hamilton, in *The Federalist Papers*, wrote that "if men were angels, no government would be necessary." And it might be said: "If professors were angels, no codes of ethics would be necessary."

I would emphasize the warning of Robert Bellah and associates (1985) that "without civic friendship, a city will disintegrate into a struggle of contending interest groups unmediated by any public solidarity"—so also the campus.

The campus is a unique type of enterprise. It relies to an unusual degree on individual preferences toward conduct. It has generally effective legislative processes, less effective administrative processes, and virtually no effective judicial processes. This is true of all guild-like organizations. This arrangement works well when norms are well known and nearly universally respected. It works less well when norms are less subject to agreement and to observance. We are now in such a period. It thus becomes more important to have judicial processes that will define and refine and apply the norms. This can be done internally by the campus, or it will be done, as is already evident, by external agencies—courts and legislatures; and, almost certainly, not as well done. My preference is clearly more internal "solidarity," although I recognize that there are arguments for resorting to external authority on the grounds that the campus is better served by getting rid of divisive problems.

The discussion that follows is centered on the conduct of intellectual life from a moral point of view. There is, however, another angle of approach: What pays off economically? It is instructive to note that the two professions with the longest-established codes of conduct and the most active mechanisms for enforcement are the medical and the legal. Both professions historically have clearly benefited economically from high confidence in the integrity of the conduct of their members and suffered if and when that confidence was eroded; and in recent times it has been eroding rapidly. The academic profession, including its scientists, now also is confronted by the specter of the economic consequences of suspect integrity. The paymaster may be marching alongside the preacher.

Approach the topic of academic ethics not as a scholar drawing on accepted doctrine but more as a participant-observer, who has had to make his own way largely on an ad hoc basis in the midst of controversy, drawing on personal perceptions of good practice.

I have been startled at how reluctant academics seem to be to treat ethical issues. As a young teacher at Berkeley, I was asked by a distinguished professor at the University of Chicago, who had a Quakerly concern about the academic study of ethics, to bring together influential members of the Berkeley teaching staff, particularly scientists, to talk with him about it. They were polite to him but not to me afterward. They made it clear that this was not a subject that could hold any interest for scientists or scholars of

any sort and that I should have known this; that the discussion of ethics was best left to the church; that ethics was just a matter of personal taste and anything goes in matters of taste—with one extremely important exception: a commitment to scientific truth in the academic world.

Years later, as president of the University of California, I asked a faculty committee to draw up a code of academic conduct at a time when there were several practical issues of unethical conduct by members of the academic staff. It did so very conscientiously, but the draft was subsequently rejected after a fiery speech at a faculty assembly to the effect that professors were moral persons, and, therefore, whatever they did was ipso facto moral; no code was needed, and any attempt at one was an insult. I thought of the comment attributed to William James that "no priesthood ever reformed itself." But I still marvel at the large literature by academics on ethics in general and on medical and legal and business ethics in particular as compared with the slight literature on academic ethics. Why do academics not also study their own academic ethics? I also have found, in practice, that is not enough just to assume "that those in higher education do the Lord's work, always with dedication and purity of heart" (Enarson, 1984).

Any segment of society must have some common standards of conduct within it in order to operate effectively, different as these standards may be, including the intellectual. A well-accepted code of conduct is essential to any community of trust, and a community of trust is inherently more efficient than a community without trust. Fewer and less-specified formal laws or rules or contracts are necessary. Less litigation is likely. The continuous verification of conduct is less necessary. A community of trust relies on a series of confident expectations about the conduct of others. Relations among human beings who must cooperate with each other generally work better when more is left to implicit understanding and less to detailed explicit contracts.

Such rules of behavior might be designated as "derivative ethics"—derivative from the requirements of effectiveness. They seek to set forth what each person should expect in the conduct of others and what each person in return owes in conduct toward others to make longer-term relations more effective. Our concern here is the set of rules that best fit the academic segment of society.

The academic ethic, in my experience, is generally well, even exceptionally well, observed in *research*, although there are many individual transgressions. Evidence is occasionally fabricated, distorted, or misrepresented, analysis is sometimes faulty, unacknowledged exploitation of the ideas of others occasionally occurs. Generally, however, the system of checks and balances takes good care of these errors. There are unscrupulously ambitious scholars eager to falsify evidence and present it in many publications to gain the end of fame. They are,

**T**he ethics  
of the cultivation of knowledge were in better condition  
before they became so subject to the enticements of money from  
the outside and to the intrusion of politics inside.

however, usually caught and discredited. Despite instances of deviation, honesty in the search for truth in research is, in my judgment, very studiously observed by the vast majority of academics who engage in research, and, in any event, is subject to alert criticism.

There are aspects of research, nevertheless, that give cause for concern. Too much research is undertaken primarily because money is available for it and not for its intellectual challenge. To choose particular problems because money is available from the foundations and the federal government—as good as the judgment of these funding agencies usually is—can distort research in the direction, for example, of national defense and of private health. Some scientists also, in effect, first “sell” their research to the firms that use them as consultants or on whose boards they serve before they publish it in scientific publications that are open for all who wish to study them. Some scholars, as in my own field of economics, use the easy methods of statistics alone, rather than looking for all good evidence, in part so they can publish more and sooner. Too many social scientists leap too quickly from their models that abstract from reality to policy statements for the real world.

There are even more problems in *teaching* than in research, because it is less subject to the scrutiny of the scientific and scholarly communities. A teacher in the classroom is less subject to challenge by his or her colleagues than is the scientist who has published the results of research in a journal. But students generally are alert to misuses of evidence and to efforts at indoctrination to a single point of view; they can read works presenting other points of view if they wish; and they often attend more than one course in the same subject of knowledge. In the main, I have been much impressed by the quality and fairness of teaching, even though it is not subject to much external scrutiny and usually is not rewarded adequately even when of the highest quality. It is as good as it is mostly because academics are interested in their subjects, do not like to fail in any endeavor they undertake, and have a well-developed “instinct of workmanship.”

However, there has been, in recent times, much more politicalization of the academic profession than there used to be, and this does show up in the classroom; some teachers propagate their own political beliefs and preferences without acknowledging them as such. At the least,

university teachers should present the facts fairly and present alternative systems of analysis in competition with each other, and they should separate out their own evaluative standpoints from the conclusions they draw from their analysis of the empirical evidence. The politicalization of the campus has also led to many episodes of denial of free speech to speakers from outside the university and some episodes of coercion of teachers within the university.

A more quiet form of coercion has taken place by now in many classes where teachers avoid sensitive subjects; such subjects are often avoided as well in discussions among scholars where controversial topics can explode into political diatribes and thus tend to be avoided. Caution and reticence have become common for fear of arousing acrimonious responses—a “silent spring” on campus.

The ethics of the cultivation of knowledge were in better condition before they became so subject to the enticements of money from the outside and to the intrusion of politics inside. It is now not so much the external power of the trustees that corrupts, as Thorstein Veblen and Upton Sinclair once charged, as it is the internal desires to obtain money for one’s research or for oneself, or to advance one’s own political views.

**E**ric Ashby has called for “a Hippocratic oath for the academic profession,” (1968) using the analogy of the oath still taken by many graduating medical doctors, as it has been by so many of their predecessors over the more than two thousand years since 400 B.C. He asks for a “declared code of professional practice” in what he fears is a “disintegrating profession.” The Ashby code would be based on the conviction that “scholarship has an inner integrity.” His code would “not permit” the scholar “to hide some facts”; would not permit consideration of race or religion or political party to be taken “into account” in “assessing” scholarship; would emphasize “tolerance” for other points of view; and would encourage teaching of both “conventional” and “dissenting points of view.” I join with Ashby in asserting the need for such a “code” and in his related view that we now have only a “vacuum.”

There are, however, some problems with having a code and enforcing it. To begin with, there is no such accepted code now. The American Association of University Pro-

## The Ethics of Knowledge

The central purposes of academic activity are the discovery of knowledge through research and its dissemination through teaching. Certain ethical rules are inherent in the creation and distribution of knowledge. These ethical principles are rules for guiding judgment about conduct in the intellectual sphere, and they set moral limits to action above those required by law.

The ethics of knowledge has a number of components. These components are the rules of conduct appropriate to the effective advancement of knowledge, and to the integrity of teachers in relations with students and of scholars in their relations with other scholars. They declare, as I have understood them, the following actions to be obligatory:

- The careful collection and use of evidence, including the search for "inconvenient facts," as in the process of attempted "falsification."
- The careful use of the ideas and the work of others.
- The obligation to be skeptical of what is not fully proven.
- An openness to alternative explanations. This requires full freedom of expression; and this "academic freedom," in turn, requires tolerance of other points of view than one's own.
- Civility in discourse, and reliance on persuasion rather than on coercion.
- Open access to the results of re-

search conducted within the university.

- The reliance on academic merit alone in evaluating the academic performance of others.
- Care and consideration in handling human and animal subjects so as not to injure them unduly in the process of obtaining knowledge.
- Avoidance of drawing and advancing policy applications unless the full range of considerations entering into policy making has been the subject of the study; and unless not only actions, but also possible reactions, have been considered. Scholars should not go beyond their knowledge.
- Separating personal evaluation, based on moral and political values, from the presentation of evidence and analysis; and, as a corollary, making any personal evaluations explicit.
- Following the general principle of "fair share," as defined by Rawls (1971) and which applies to other organizations in addition to the academic, that "a person is under an obligation to do his part as specified by the rules of an institution whenever he has voluntarily accepted the benefits of the scheme or has taken advantage of the opportunities it offers to advance his interests, provided this institution is just and fair. . . . We are not to gain from the cooperative efforts of others without doing our fair share."

- Rejecting the use of position and facilities made available for the creation and transmission of knowledge for the advancement of unrelated personal pecuniary or political goals or of ideological convictions.

- The full acceptance of the obligations to students to teach them faithfully, to advise them carefully, and to evaluate them fairly, and not to exploit them in any way.
- The full acceptance of the obligation to academic colleagues to assist them with advice on their academic pursuits, and to do so particularly for junior colleagues.
- The full acceptance of the obligation, within departments, to seek a reasonable balance of colleagues by age, by subject matter specialty, and by analytical method.

Academic ethics apply not only to scientific scholarly research, but also to teaching. Academic ethics are "academic" in the pejorative sense if not applied in all the activities that make up academic life.

The validity and pertinence of the obligations that make up academic ethics have even wider applicability. For example, "a respect for evidence and for contrary opinion are qualities of mind that we need throughout the society, as we resist the terrible certainties and brutal simplifications of the fanatic, the doctrinaire, the bigot, and the demagogue" (Trow, 1976). □

—C. K.

fessors statement, "Professional Ethics," comes the closest (1984). Professor Edward Shils (1984) and his colleagues have made an attempt at formulating a code, but nobody has adopted it as yet, to my knowledge. And getting a code can be very controversial. There are those who totally reject scholarship as being at the center of the academic enterprise. A Harvard professor, for example, has written that the "primary function of Marxists in the university" is to "take part in what is, in fact, a class struggle"; and thus our "chief task must be to disrupt production" (Lewontin, 1979-80). No code based on scholarly integrity for him and others of like mind. And not only the class struggle but the struggle between (or among) the sexes or among ethnic and racial groups may be thought by some to take precedence over scholarship. It has been, additionally, much easier to get statements on rights than on responsibilities, for, as James Q. Wilson has noted, "Rights are liberating; duties are oppressing" (1983).

The advancement of academic ethics suffers not only from the absence of agreed-upon codes but also from the paucity of literature discussing the subject, although there

are a few very helpful items—to several of which I have already referred.

If institutions of higher education are seeking to become "the conscience of the nation," as to some extent they already are, then they need to be more conscious of how they conduct themselves in advancing such a role. An attitude of "anything goes" is not guide enough.

The American university has a very peculiar form of collegial government unique among all other American institutions. Governance in most colleges and universities is now shared by or even delegated to the teaching staff for the entire range of academic activities. These include the determination of the syllabus of whole courses of study and of particular courses, the selection and conduct of research projects, the acceptance of individual students, the marking of examinations, the awarding of degrees, the appointment and promotion of individual teachers, and even the appointment and evaluation of the performance of academic administrators, in-

**U**niversities enjoyed their autonomy  
historically as a result of their ethical conduct, and now, for the first time  
in American history, it may be said that they could be in the process  
of losing some of it for the same reason.

---

cluding presidents. Only the administration of the physical plant (i.e., of grounds and buildings), finances, legal affairs, and similar matters lie mostly outside shared and delegated university government. This places an enormous responsibility on the teaching staff beyond teaching, research, and service. Each member of the academic staff has an obligation to contribute his or her "fair share" to the well-being of the institution. The American Association of University Professors has said that each member of the academic staff should "accept his share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of his institution" (1984).

In the conduct of academic affairs, the emphasis is on consultation and a strenuous effort to achieve consensus by consideration of all points of view. This process takes time, even extended time, and patience. The results historically have been, I think, excellent. The rise of American universities to their high position in the world has gone hand in hand with the rise of shared and delegated academic government, and is in large part attributable to it. It is a system based upon consent and not command.

There are, however, at least four problems about academic self-government. The first is the contrast with industrial relations, where ethical behavior is defined as keeping your agreements, being considerate of your opponents, and bearing in mind the wider ramifications of your actions. The purpose of negotiations in industrial relations is to get a set of decisions in accordance with which all participants can live and work effectively together for an extended period of time. The alternative is constant conflict—even chaos. Agreements must be made and kept.

The ethical principles observed in industrial relations contribute to stability under accepted policies; they amount to a system of industrial jurisprudence. It is both difficult and even pointless to make agreements if they are not observed. It is self-defeating to add to the difficult problem of solving conflicts the tensions of any unnecessary personal antagonisms. And agreements must be practicable within the context of the larger national and even international order.

I have tried to understand why academic life does not equally embrace these same principles and have decided it has to do with the pursuit of knowledge rather than efficiency. The pursuit of knowledge means that everything is open for reconsideration at all times, that the conflict of

mind with mind is of high value and can even be pursued acceptably with intense personal commitment, and that the individual is at the heart of the enterprise and not the collectivity that speaks with one voice and can bind its members. "Solidarity" is not a value that commands much devotion on campus. Higher education has a long tradition of operating as an "organized anarchy" (Cohen and March, 1974).

I am convinced, from long experience, that the ethical rules of conduct in industrial relations have general advantages in organizing human conduct, but also that they are not endemic to the academic enterprise. It is a different context with a different internal logic. Academic administrators should be aware of this.

My second difficulty is a product of our new generation of university teachers. (It is also a product of a new generation of university administrators, some of whom are more disposed to supporting their own welfare than to supporting that of the institution.) All over the United States, it is more difficult than it once was to get university teachers to take seriously their departmental and college responsibilities. They are more reluctant to serve on committees, and more reluctant to make time readily available when they do, and more reluctant to accept the responsibilities of writing good reports. They wish to concentrate on their own affairs and not those of the institution. (This is both a cause of and a result of the "managerial revolution" in higher education—with more managers with more influence.) Yet the price of shared and delegated academic self-government is the willingness to take on the corresponding responsibilities that it requires. Faculty members generally are now more interested in the world outside their campuses and in the development of their disciplines, and they consequently often neglect their campus responsibilities. This problem goes beyond university committees and extends to the willingness to advise and assist junior colleagues and to help all colleagues with comments on their manuscripts and syllabi.

The third difficulty is that the rules against exploitation of university facilities for personal purposes are no longer so rigorously followed and seldom so fully enforced as they once were. There is less concern about the provision that university premises should not be used by a member of the academic staff for "any purposes not connected with the performance of his academic obligations of teach-

## Works Cited

- American Association of University Professors. "Professional Ethics," in *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports*, Washington, DC: AAUP, 1984.
- Ashby, Eric. "A Hippocratic Oath for the Academic Profession," *Minerva*, Vol. 7, Nos. 1-2, Autumn-Winter 1968-69.
- Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books, 1976; see in particular pages 72f and 274f.
- Bellah, Robert N., William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, page 116.
- Cohen, Michael D. and James G. March. *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974, page 3.
- Enarson, Harold L. "The Ethical Imperative of the College Presidency," *Educational Record*, Vol. 65, Spring 1984, pages 24-26.
- Kolakowski, Leszek. *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Lewontin, Richard. "Marxists and the University," *New Political Science*, Vol. 1, Nos. 2-3, Fall-Winter 1979-80, pages 256-30.
- Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, page 343.
- Rüegg, Walter. "The Academic Ethos," *Minerva*, Vol. 24, No. 4, Winter 1986, pages 393-412.
- Shils, Edward. *The Academic Ethic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984 (first published in *Minerva*, Vol. 20, Spring-Summer 1982).
- Trow, Martin. "Higher Education and Moral Development," *AAUP Bulletin*, Vol. 62, Spring 1976, page 23.
- Wilson, James W. "Partisanship, Judgment, and the Academic Ethic," *Minerva*, Vol. 21, Summer-Autumn 1983, pages 285-291.

ing, research, academic administration and academic citizenship," and particularly not "for political purposes" (Shils, 1984). This difficulty arises from the intrusion of political issues into the life of the universities. Academic staffs are more internally divided by politics than almost any other part of American society—the corporation, the trade union, the church, among others. Comparatively more academic staff members of universities, also, are located at the liberal and left end of the political spectrum than at the moderate or conservative end. The middle is comparatively weak.

**F**ourth is the general tendency among colleagues in academic life to look the other way about apparent misconduct, to find excuses if and when such conduct comes before quasi-judicial bodies of the university.

The academic profession is a self-indulgent profession (as are all other professions), that nevertheless, most of the time and in most situations, fortunately operates in a highly ethical manner. The "Declaration of Principles" of the American Association of University Professors in 1915 stated: "If this profession should prove itself unwilling to purge the ranks of the incompetent and the unworthy . . . it is certain that the task will be performed by others."

Good citizenship is, among the four, my major concern. And good citizenship is more needed now than ever before, as 75 percent of faculty members are being replaced in the course of the 15 years from 1995 to 2010, and the quality of their replacements and their socialization into institutional life depends very heavily on the quality of citizenship of the now-existing faculties.

**I**s the academic profession really disintegrating in its ethical conduct, as Eric Ashby has suggested? Thorstein Veblen thought that the system of academic ethics never had a chance—higher education moved so quickly from control by religious institutions to control by the business world. I think, to the contrary, that it really did

have a chance, and that the period from 1860 to 1960 was a time of great advance in its refinement and in its application in practice. I once looked upon the colleges and universities as the purest ethical institutions on earth. I regret to say that I have observed what I consider to be a partial disintegration since about 1960, more in some areas and in some institutions than in others. My particular concern is the area of good citizenship, not research and teaching.

A fuller evaluation of the possibility of disintegration would require a deeper examination of some of the developments discussed above, but also of some developments not discussed at all, as in the areas of intercollegiate athletics, sexual harassment of students by teachers, secret research, departments dominated by a single ideology or methodology, failure of students to repay their loans, student theft of library books and cheating in examinations, inflation of marks by teachers, exploitation of graduate students as low-cost teachers of introductory subjects, among others.

So much is at stake. Universities and colleges enjoyed their great autonomy, in part, because they were trusted, as the churches were before them (despite their sometimes derelictions from the true faith), to govern themselves in an ethical manner. Universities enjoyed their autonomy historically as a result of their ethical conduct, and now, for the first time in American history, it may be said that they could be in the process of losing some of it for the same reason. Internally, also, we see some erosion of the campus as a community of mutual trust. For instance, there is no longer the same trust in the marks given by individual teachers in examinations, and there is now almost no trust in formal letters of recommendation. These are only two signs of the present state.

I conclude, regretfully, that the academic profession may, in fact, be disintegrating slowly in some aspects of its ethical conduct. I also conclude that the academic world should not practice evaluative neutrality about its own ethical values any more than should the professions of medicine and law. □